

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 091340Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6230

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMCONSUL MILAN

AMCONSUL NAPLES

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 03829

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IT, AU

SUBJ: SOUTH TYROL/ALTO ADIGE

REF: ROME 3563, VIENNA 1822

1. A FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR AUSTRIAN AFFAIRS HAS DENIED THAT THE RECENT VISIT OF A SOUTH TYROL PEOPLE'S PARTY (SVP) DELEGATION TO VIENNA TO MEET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BIELKA HAS LED TO ANY STRAINS IN ITALO-AUSTRIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS. THE OFFICIALS SAW THE VIENNA VISITS AS A TYPICAL SVP PRE-ELECTORAL PLOY--THERE ARE SOME LOCAL ELECTIONS IN SOUTH TYROL/ALTO ADIGE IN MAY WITH NATIONAL ELECTIONS TO OCCUR PRIOR TO JUNE 1977 -- TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT FOR PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING OF THE SOUTH TYROL AUTONOMY PACKAGE. THE MEETING WAS ALSO STIMULATED BY THE SVP BELIEF THAT A BIELKA VISIT TO ROME WAS IMMINENT. (ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, A BIELKA VISIT HAS LONG BEEN AGREED TO IN PRINCIPLE, BUT THE PRECISE TIMING OF THE ACTUAL EVENT HAS NEVER BEEN FIXED.)

2. AS THE ITALIANS UNDERSTAND IT, THE MAIN THRUST OF
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THE SVP ARGUMENT WAS THAT NOT ENOUGH PROGRESS HAS BEEN

ACHIEVED IN RECRUITING ETHNIC GERMANS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT POSITIONS. THE SVP HOLDS THAT AT THE PRESENT RATE OF PROGRESS, THE GOAL OF A BALANCE OF THREE ETHNIC GERMANS FOR EACH ITALIAN WOULD BE REACHED ONLY AFTER APPROXIMATELY 50 YEARS. THE ITALIANS CONCEDE THAT PROGRESS IS SLOW FOR A VARIETY OF WELL DEFINED REASONS, BUT BELIEVE THAT THE ABOVE-MENTIONED GOAL WILL BE ACHIEVED IN 20 TO 25 YEARS. A SECOND BUT SUBSIDIARY PROBLEM IS BILINGUALISM IN LOCAL OFFICES AND TRIBUNALS.

3.OUR SOURCE STATED THAT THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT HAS NOT RAISED THE SOUTH TYROL ISSUE WITH THE ITALIANS FOLLOWING THE SVP REPRESENTATION. ACCORDING TO HIM, THE ITALIANS BELIEVE THAT THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT IS SOMEWHAT EMBARRASSED BY THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT AND WOULD LIKE TO PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN ITSELF AND THE SVP.VOLPE

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